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Minimum Documentation Fiche 2003

composed by national / regional working party of:



0.1 Picture of building/site
depicted item:
source:
date:

„Mihai Eminescu” Summer Theatre
Arhitectura RPR (Romania), no. 3, 1954
1954 (e)

1. Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden

1.1 current name of building
1.2 variant or former name
1.3 number & name of street
1.4 town
1.5 province/state
1.6 zip code
1.7 country
1.8 national grid reference
1.9 classification/typology

„Mihai Eminescu” Summer Theatre
„23rd of August” Summer Theatre
61, Arhitect Dimitrie Hârjeu St. / Basarabia Boulevard
Bucharest, sector 2
Bucharest Municipality
021992 (cod poștal)
Romania
44° 26' 03" N 26° 08'33" E
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1.10 protection status & date

Proposed for listing as historic monument group B
(local importance)

2 History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose

A 4 000 seats open air theatre, included in the “23rd of August” Culture and Sport Park, which was set up on the occasion of the 4th World Festival of Youth and Students, organised in Bucharest in 1953

2.2 dates

Start of site work – winter 1952 (c); completion and inauguration – 1 august 1953 (e)

2.3 architectural and other designers

Anton Dâmboianu (architectural project)

2.4 others associated with building

Overall project for the “23rd of August” park: arch. W. Juster, arch. G. Filipeanu, eng. G. Aznavorian

2.5 significant alterations with dates

Repairs / additions / renovation (repeated works), with the partial covering or replacing the initial finishes and the setting up of a technical booth on the entrance axis

2.6 current use

Open-air theatre

2.7 current condition

Medium state - the decorative details, especially the capitals and the bases of the columns, the arches and the cornice are partially damaged because of the low quality materials (stucco and plaster) and superficial repairs, although initially they were carefully moulded.

3 Description

3.1 general description

The architectural solution of the theatre, conceived for a 4 200 seat capacity, combines the Greco-Hellenistic model of the dialogue with the natural site and the Roman model of the totally enclosed space with a fixed architectural stage set.

As original features, in the semi-circle of the *orchestra* a pit is excavated, penetrated by the undulating contour of the *scena*, and two symmetrical ramps descend to the centre of the stage from the backdrop double portico, which forms a transparent limit towards the park.

The stage annexes are grouped together in the pedestal-like ground-floor of the portico, flanked on both sides by two access ramps towards the terraces and the stage. The main public entrance, shaped as a portico bordered by the box offices, is set up at the upper side of the *cavea*, on the axis of the stage and facing towards a small square situated on the western edge of the park. The entrance pavilion makes a less monumental correspondent, but equally transparent, of the stage portico.

The stylistic expression of the theatre and of the whole park composition belongs to the highly ideologised trend of socialist realism, which combines, for propagandistic purposes, the classical tradition and the traditions of the various nations or cultures where its doctrine was officially imposed.

The classical models of the ancient theatre and the Renaissance portico blend with the repertoire of the Brancovan architectural style from 17th-18th centuries' Wallachia, under the sign of an openness to nature which characterizes both the local and the Greco-Hellenistic tradition, while the theme of the axially-ordered enclosure is specifically Roman.

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The predominant element of the architectural composition is the slender portico, inspired by the early Italian Renaissance, but decorated with motifs that are borrowed and adapted from the repertoire of the national tradition (capitals, balustrade panels, friezes with ceramic disks).

3.2 construction

The load-bearing structure of the ensemble is mixed, consisting of brick masonry walls combined with reinforced concrete frames and slabs, with a flat roof for the main building and tiled gable roofs for the annexes. There are no available data on the structure of the tiers.

3.3 context

The summer theatre is inserted in the natural environment of the park, and perfectly adapted to the land topography: the tiered seating takes over the 8-9 m difference in level of the slope, and the scene portico opens by an esplanade towards the landscaped setting of the lake, which is surrounded by rich vegetation.

The theatre is part an ample composition based on primary and secondary axes, oriented to the cardinal points, which order a coherent system including the park, circulation arteries and housing areas. The theatre forms the axial end of a secondary regulating line oriented east-west, which starts from the parachute tower and crosses the lake, linking visually the two piers and the two segments of a monumental alley.

4 Evaluation

4.1 technical

The construction of the theatre, using common and/or traditional techniques, does not include noteworthy technical components.

4.2 social

The “23rd of August” Theatre, like all socio-cultural edifices from the Stalinist period, was built with the stated aim of promoting the favourite themes of the communist regimes propaganda – Cultural Revolution, socialist reconstruction, eradication of the gap between centre and periphery. Nevertheless, the theatre has become a pleasing presence thanks to its sensitive blending in the natural environment of the park, the recourse to familiar, traditionally-established forms, and its domestic, non-ostentatious monumentality.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

The summer theatre is remarkable for the coherence of the classical composition, the balanced proportions and the plastic treatment of the architectural elements, the quality of the decorative details, as well as the accomplished synthesis of principles and motifs taken up from various traditions (classical Antiquity, Renaissance, Brancovan epoch). The aesthetic and architectural features are doubled by the urban value of the relationship with the natural environment of the park and its perfect insertion into a vast urban composition, unparalleled in Romania.

4.4 historical

The former “23rd of August” Theatre belongs to the conservative, traditionalist orientation that the eastern communist regimes opposed to western modernism in the first decade after World War II. It is a typical example of Socialist realism, one of the series of buildings erected in Bucharest on the occasion of an emblematic event, the 1953 World Festival of Youth and Students.

4.5 general assessment

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As both expression and function, the former “23rd of August” Summer Theatre is a representative work for the doctrine of socialist realism, imposed on the entire eastern block under the slogan “socialist in content, national in form”.

5 Documentation

5.1 principal references

Publications:

MAICU, Horia, ‘Despre unele construcții social-culturale realizate în București în anul 1953’, Arhitectura RPR (Romania), no. 3, 1954, pp. 1-11

- FARB, D., ‘Realizări și perspective în proiectarea de locuințe pentru orașul București’, Arhitectura RPR (România), no. 10-11, 1958, pp. 10-13

- IONESCU, Grigore, ‘Arhitectura în România – perioada anilor 1944-1969’, București, Ed. Academiei R.S.R., 1969

- GIURESCU, Constantin C., ‘Istoria Bucureștilor’, București, Editura Sport-Turism, 1979, ISBN 978-973-645-275-8

- PARUSI, Gheorghe, ‘Cronologia Bucureștilor (20 septembrie 1459 – 31 Decembrie 1989: zilele, faptele, oamenii Capitalei de-a lungul a 530 de ani)’, București, Compania, 2007, ISBN 978-973-7841-45-2

- the website of “Lia Manoliu” National Sports Complex - www.csnlamanoliu.ro/istoric

5.2 visual material attached

- Black and white period photographs – Arhitectura RPR (Romania), no. 3, 1954

- Colour photographs - Aurelian Stroe, Ruxandra Nemțeanu, Mihaela Criticos

- Satellite photographs – Google Earth; Map of the Historical Monuments of Romania (<http://www.apmnir.ro/map.php>)

5.3 rapporteur/date

Mihaela Criticos 2012

6 Fiche report examination by ISC/R

name of examining ISC member:

date of examination: 2012

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comments:

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